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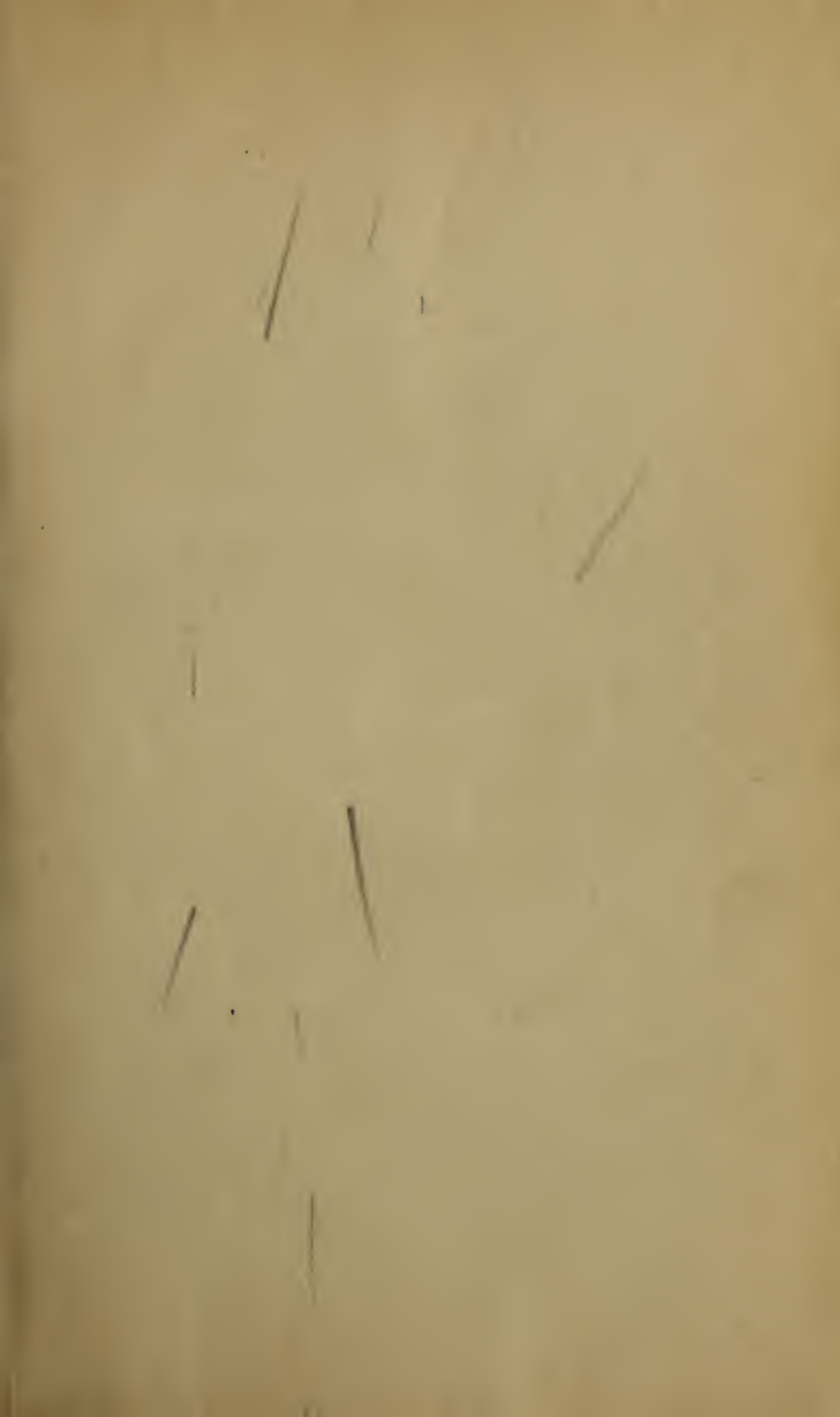
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PAMPHLETS.  
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# CALIFORNIA:

AND THE WAY TO GET THERE;

WITH THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS,

RELATING TO THE

# GOLD REGION,

INCLUDING

COL. MASON'S REPORT,

AND OTHER AUTHENTIC INFORMATION CONNECTED WITH THE  
SUBJECT.

~~~~~  
BY J. ELY SHERWOOD.  
~~~~~

"If there be an Elysium on earth,  
It is this—it is this."—MOORE.

=====

NEW-YORK:

GEORGE F. NESBITT, STATIONER AND PRINTER,  
Corner of Wall and Water Streets.

1848.



CALIFORNIA :  
HER WEALTH AND RESOURCES ;

WITH MANY INTERESTING FACTS

RESPECTING THE CLIMATE AND PEOPLE ;

THE

OFFICIAL AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE OF THE DAY,

RELATING TO THE

GOLD REGION ;

COLONEL MASON'S REPORT,

AND ALL THAT PART OF THE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HAVING REFERENCE TO THE COUNTRY IN WHICH THESE VAST DISCOVERIES HAVE  
BEEN MADE ; ALSO,

A MEMORIAL OFFERED IN CONGRESS,

IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED RAILROAD TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

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BY J. ELY SHERWOOD.

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"If there be an Elysium on earth,  
It is this, it is this."—MOORE.

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NEW-YORK :  
GEORGE F. NESBITT, STATIONER AND PRINTER,  
CORNER OF WALL AND WATER STS.

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1848.

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ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, in the year 1848, by J. ELY SHERWOOD,  
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District of New-  
York.

## P R E F A C E .

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PUBLIC attention having been so forcibly drawn towards the subject of emigration to California, the publishers have conceived the idea of bringing into the market a *pamphlet*, combining all the principal points of interest, and such general information, as may be most acceptable to those who may feel inclined to rank themselves among our list of purchasers. The low rate at which it is gotten up, and the fact that it contains all the matter of material importance comprised in other books, will ensure it, of course, a rapid sale.

The following extracts from a letter, with which a gentleman of this city has kindly favored us, will not inappropriately commence the annexed compilation of facts:

SUTTER'S FORT, AUGUST 11, 1848.

FRIEND ——— :

Having contrived to borrow a sheet of paper from an officer attached to Col. Mason's command, I embrace this opportunity of communicating to you some idea of the excitement at present prevailing in this district about the discovery of such great quantities of the precious ore, yclept gold. When I last wrote to my friends at home, I was a quiet and pains-taking merchant of San Francisco, my stock in trade consisting of everything and any thing that I might come across in the way of domestic utensils, &c., &c. No sooner, however, had the news reached us of the discoveries at Marshall's, than I was instantly deserted by my clerks, and even my French-Canadian cook, who boasts of having made all imaginable dishes to suit the dainty palate of one or other of the Iturbide family in Mexico, cut stick and ran, leaving me "alone in my glory." What, in this emergency, was I to do? Nobody would serve me in my hour of need—I therefore followed the example of my neighbors, and here I am, up to my "flanks" in mud, water, &c., with a curiously shaped trowel in one hand, and a "cradle" in the other, scraping and splurging, and hawling up lumps of gold at each endeavor. I have, so far, got together about two thousand five hundred dollars worth of gold, and have only been at work a month. My "partners" however, Hackstaff and Carr, have made a still better thing of it, having struck a richer spot than that upon which I am at work. I assure you, I often think of the pleasant hours we have passed at ———'s restaurant in New-York,

and wish that I could find an opportunity of spending some of my gold there, as "once upon a time" I did. There are numbers of U. S. deserters straying about, and I should not be at all surprised if the entire regiment followed suit. As for *apprehending* the deserters, *that*, I *apprehend*, would be a difficult matter; in fact, it is a dangerous matter to send out other soldiers to apprehend them, as they also would desert, and Col. Mason would have no effective body left to enforce obedience to his orders.

As there will, doubtless, be many among you, who will be impregnated with a desire to visit this fortune-favored region, as soon as the news of the late discoveries shall have reached your parts, I have judged it not *mal-a-propos* to furnish you with some information respecting the climate, products of the country, etc., etc.; for there will, I dare say, be many who will locate permanently in the country. You would be astonished to see how rapidly towns and villages (of rough material it is true,) are beginning to spring up around the concentrating points in the gold district.

During the Summer and greater part of Fall the winds on the coast about San Francisco blow from the west, and north-west, from the ocean. The mornings are pleasant and clear, and with the exception of winds at noon, the temperature of the atmosphere during the major part of the day is about the same. There is little really cold weather during the winter here; in fact, you would be astonished and delighted, should you come out here, yourself, at the change between the climate at home and that here.

Grapes are raised here in abundance, of a flavor unequalled by those of any other country on the face of the globe; they are a favorite article of diet with everybody, high and low. The soil is in most places fertile beyond description, and what water we lack during the dry months is supplied by irrigation. I will not dwell materially upon these points, for the papers at home, I perceive, teem with accounts far better conceived than any thing I could produce, being as you are aware, much more accustomed to *posting* books than writing them. The season for sowing wheat commences early in November, and continues until early in Spring.

When I have made my fortune, I will, perhaps, revisit you. *Adios!*

J—— G——.



# CALIFORNIA:

HER WEALTH, RESOURCES AND CLIMATE,

WITH REMARKS ON THE

## GOLD REGION.

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### SECTION I.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COUNTRY, MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF  
ITS PEOPLE, &c., &c.

FOR several years past, California has monopolized a great portion of the public attention. The fact that it offers to our government a key, as it were, by which the treasure boxes of India and Asia may be unlocked, and made to conduce to our benefit, as well as to that of England and the various European nations, which draw an income from its valuable products, has alone conduced towards this result; but the recent discovery of a number of rich gold mines, of such vast extent, that, were our entire people to emigrate to the shores of California, there would be found sufficient to support, if not enrich, each individual, has drawn public attention towards it in a far greater measure than has ever been the case. Numbers of *books* have been issued, detailing in a voluminous manner various particulars with regard to the country, but nothing has, as yet, been offered to the public containing a PLAIN STATEMENT of FACTS, in the order in which they have from time to time appeared in the public prints, and the published documents of the U. S. Senate. With the view of supplying this deficiency, we publish the present entertaining pamphlet, which contains, as will be seen, a thorough synopsis of everything which people who think of emigrating to California will be apt to require. The present chapter affords a taste of California society, as exhibited in Santa Barbara, which is a fair specimen of the towns on the

coast. The population here is of an entirely different class from that at San Francisco, for as that is almost entirely American, this is purely Californian, with all the peculiarities and habits that attach themselves to the Spanish character. This is a town of about two hundred houses, built as all houses are in California, of "adobie," a mixture of mud and straw, baked in the sun. They are but one story, of about twenty feet in height, many of them contain but one room, and the major part even of the most respectable "casas" have floors laid with the solid face of mother earth above, lumber being too expensive an article in this land of no saw-mills to allow the luxury of a board floor. They are all covered with a roof of tiles, many of them whitewashed; and seen from the beach, the town presents a neat and pretty, though rather sombre appearance. Santa Barbara is located upon a level plain, which embraces an area of some ten square miles, extending some distance back to the town. Before it is spread out a magnificent sheet of water, whose beach extends nearly thirty miles along the coast, from the two points that enclose the bay of Santa Barbara. On the right is a gently sloping hill, rising to the height of nearly a thousand feet, from which the town appears like a little panoramic map, or a village of mud houses, such as school-boys mould in clam shells; directly back, and extending about twenty miles along the coast, is a rugged range of impassable mountains, a natural barrier to protect the town from any invasion by an enemy from that quarter. A mile back of the town, and overlooking it, is the old mission of Santa Barbara, with its white walls and cross-mounted spires. Here, however, where a few years since all was prosperity and enterprise, now is ruin and decay. This mission formerly was possessed of some ten or fifteen thousand head of cattle and several thousand horses; many branches of useful labor were carried on by the Indians who were brought in from the wilds in the interior, and partially civilized under the care of the good missionaries who had the control of the mission estates. The Mexican Government in its wisdom, or rather in its stupidity, however, saw fit to "secularize" this property, withdrew it from the control of the padres, and sent "administradores" from Mexico, who, after filling their own pockets from the property, usually left it in a worse condition than they found it. The missions are now nothing more than purely religious establishments; and the Indians, who under their control and the fatherly care of the padres, had been made decent and useful men, returned to their tribes, and became ten times worse than before. At the mission of Santa Barbara there are now two padres, Gonzalles and Antonio, both enlightened and liberal men, and the former one of the most perfect gentlemen I ever met.

The population of the town of Santa Barbara is about one thousand,

exclusive of our troops, which have made an addition of two hundred to it within the past few weeks. This is the human population, the *quete de rezon* (people of reason) as the Californians modestly term themselves, in contradistinction from the Indians. Of the latter, there is usually a floating population of a hundred or two, who live by service at two or three dollars a month, and pilfering whenever an opportunity offers. Besides these, there are, at the lowest calculation, five dogs to every man, as snarling, good for nothing curs as ever barked. The smallest, and at the same time by far the largest population, however, is the community of "pugas" (fleas), which infest every house in innumerable quantities. To one who has been reared in the stirring and busy life of a Yankee town, or has passed his years amid the din of a great commercial city, the appearance of things here is strange indeed. The merry song of the busy laborer is never heard to break the air here. The rude but cheerful music of the hammer and trowel never disturb the sleepers in the morning. The happy faces of workmen returning to their homes after the daily toil are never seen, and the air of contentment that dwells around and in the laborer's cot, is here displaced by the lazy appearance that might have marked the looks of the inhabitants of the castle of indolence. In the whole town there are but two native mechanics, a hatter and a shoemaker. Some one or two others employ half naked Indians in making shoes, saddles, and some small articles of household furniture. The "rason" mount their "caballos" in the morning, ride about the town all day, smoke "cigaritos," drink "aguadiente," get up horse-races and cock-fights, attend "fandangos" at night, and turn in for a sleep, from which they awake to another daily round of their "arduous labors." Once or twice a year they spend a few weeks at their ranchos, which are scattered in an area of a hundred miles around here, branding their cattle and horses, sowing a little grain, and leaving the whole in charge of a "major domo" till they return again. Thus they live a life of lazy ease and indolence, and thus they will live till the spirit of Yankee enterprise becomes diffused among them and teaches them the truth of the great law of labor.

The ladies of Santa Barbara never appear in the streets excepting on occasions of necessity and when going to church. They never wear bonnets, but instead a "reboso," a kind of mantle which passes over their heads, and is thrown in graceful folds over the shoulder. As one approaches them, the reboso is drawn more closely around the face until you pass, only a dark eye can be seen peering through the folds.

## SECTION II.

## MINERAL LANDS IN CALIFORNIA.

*Extract from a Letter from Mr. Larkin to Mr. Buchanan.*

SAN FRANCISCO, (UPPER CALIFORNIA,) }  
JUNE 1st, 1848. }

SIR : \* \* \* I have to report to the State Department one of the most astonishing excitements and state of affairs now existing in this country, that perhaps has ever been brought to the notice of the Government. On the American fork of the Sacramento and Feather River, another branch of the same, and the adjoining lands, there has been, within the present year, discovered a placer, a vast tract of land containing gold, in small particles. This gold, thus far, has been taken on the bank of the river, from the surface to eighteen inches in depth, and is supposed deeper, and to extend over the country.

On account of the inconvenience of washing, the people have, up to this time, only gathered the metal on the banks, which is done simply with a shovel, filling a shallow dish, bowl, basket, or tin pan, with a quantity of black sand, similar to the class used on paper, and washing out the sand by movement of the vessel. It is now two or three weeks since the men employed in these washings have appeared in this town with gold, to exchange for merchandise and provisions. I presume nearly \$20,000 of this gold has as yet been so exchanged. Some 200 or 300 men have remained up the river, or are gone to their homes, for the purpose of returning to the Placera, and washing immediately with shovels, picks, and baskets ; many of them, for the first few weeks, depending on borrowing from others. I have seen the written statement of the work of one man for sixteen days, which averaged \$25 per day ; others have, with a shovel and pan, or wooden bowl, washed out \$10 to even \$50 in a day. There are now some men yet washing who have \$500 to \$1,000. As they have to stand two feet in the river, they work but a few hours in the day, and not every day in the week.

A few men have been down in boats to this port, spending twenty to thirty ounces of gold each—about \$300. I am confident that this town (San Francisco,) has one-half of its tenements empty, locked up with the furniture. The owners, storekeepers, lawyers, mechanics and laborers—all gone to the Sacramento with their families. Small parties of five to fifteen men, have sent to this town and offered cooks ten to fifteen dollars per day, for a few weeks. Mechanics and teamsters, earning the year past five to eight dollars per day, have struck and gone. Several U. S. Volunteers have deserted. U. S. Barque Anita, belonging to the Army, now at anchor here, has but six men. One Sandwich Island vessel in port

lost all her men; engaged another crew at \$50 for the run, of fifteen days, to the Islands.

One American captain having his men shipped on this coast in such a manner that they could leave at any time, had them all on the eve of quitting, when he agreed to continue their pay and food; leaving one on board, he took a boat and carried them to the gold regions—furnishing tools and giving his men one-third. They have been gone a week. Common spades and shovels, one month ago worth \$1, will now bring \$10, at the gold regions. I am informed \$50 has been offered for one. Should this gold continue as represented, this town and others would be depopulated. Clerks' wages have risen from \$600 to \$1,000 per annum, and board; cooks, \$25 to \$30 per month. This sum will not be any inducement a month longer, unless the fever and ague appears among the washers. The *Californian*, printed here, stopped this week. The *Star* newspaper office, where the new laws of Gov. Mason, for this country are printing, has but one man left. A merchant, lately from China, has even lost his China servants. Should the excitement continue through the year, and the whale ships visit San Francisco, I think they will lose most all their crews. How Col. Mason can retain his men, unless he puts a force on the spot, I know not.

I have seen several pounds of this gold, and consider it very pure, worth, in New York, \$17 to \$18 per ounce—\$14 to \$16 in merchandise, is paid for it here. What good or bad effect this gold region will have on California, I cannot foretell. It may end this year; but I am informed it will continue many years. Mechanics now in this town are only waiting to finish some rude machinery, to enable them to obtain the gold more expeditiously, and free from working in the river. Up to this time, but few Californians have gone to the mines, being afraid the Americans will soon have trouble among themselves, and cause disturbance to all around. I have seen some of the black sand, as taken from the bottom of the river, (I should think in the States it would bring 25 to 50 cents per pound,) containing many pieces of gold; they are from the size of the head of a pin to the weight of the eighth of an ounce. I have seen some weighing one-quarter of an ounce, (\$4.) Although my statements are almost incredible, I believe I am within the statements believed by every one here. Ten days back, the excitement had not reached Monterey. I shall, within a few days, visit this gold mine, and will make another report to you. Enclosed you will have a specimen.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

THOMAS O. LARKIN.

Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN, Sec. of State, Washington.

P. S.—This placer, or gold region, is situated on public land.

*Mr. Larkin to Mr. Buchanan.*

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA, June 28, 1848.

SIR :—My last dispatch to the State Department was written in San Francisco, the 1st of this month. In that I had the honor to give some information respecting the new “placer,” or gold regions, lately discovered on the branches of the Sacramento river. Since the writing of that dispatch, I have visited a part of the gold region, and found it all I had heard and much more than I anticipated. The part that I visited was upon a fork of the American river, a branch of the Sacramento, joining the main river at Sutter’s Fort. The place in which I found the people digging was about 25 miles from the fort by land.

I have reason to believe that gold will be found on many branches of the Sacramento and the Joaquin rivers. People are already scattered over one hundred miles of land, and it is supposed that the “placer” extends from river to river. At present, the workmen are employed within 10 or 20 yards of the river, that they may be convenient to water. On Feather river, there are several branches upon which the people are digging for gold. This is two or three days’ ride from the place I visited.

At my camping place I found, on a surface of two or three miles on the banks of the river, some fifty tents, mostly owned by Americans. These had their families. There are no Californians who have taken their families, as yet, to the gold regions; but few, or none, will ever do it; some from New-Mexico may do so next year, but no Californians.

I was two nights at a tent occupied by eight Americans, viz. : two sailors, one clerk, two carpenters, and three daily workmen. These men were in company; had two machines, each made from 100 feet of boards (worth there \$150, in Monterey \$15—being one day’s work,) made similar to a child’s cradle, 10 feet long, without the ends.

The two evenings, I saw these eight men bring to their tents the labor of the day. I suppose they made each \$50 per day; their own calculation was two pounds of gold a day—four ounces to a man—\$64. I saw two brothers that worked together, and only worked by washing the dirt in a tin pan, weigh the gold they obtained in one day; the result was \$7 to one, \$82 to the other. There were two reasons for this difference: one man worked less hours than the other, and by chance had ground less impregnated with gold. I give this statement as an extreme case. During my visit I was an interpreter for a native of Monterey, who was purchasing a machine or canoe. I first tried to purchase boards and hire a carpenter for him. There were but a few hundred feet of boards to be had; for these the owner asked me \$50 per hundred, (\$500 per M.) and a carpenter washing gold dust demanded \$50 per day for working. I at last pur-

chased a log dug-out, with a riddle and sieve made of willow boughs on it, for \$120, payable in gold dust at \$14 per ounce. The owner excused himself for the price, by saying he was two days making it, and even then demanded the use of it until sunset. My Californian has told me, since, that himself, partner, and two Indians, obtained, with this canoe, eight ounces the first, and five ounces the second day.

I am of the opinion that on the American fork, Feather river, and Copimes river, there are near 2,000 people, nine-tenths of them foreigners. Perhaps there are 100 families, who have their teams, wagons and tents. Many persons are waiting to see whether the months of July and August will be sickly, before they leave their present business to go to the "Placer." The discovery of this gold was made by some Mormons, in January or February, who for a time kept it a secret; the majority of those who are working there began in May. In most every instance the men, after digging a few days, have been compelled to leave for the purpose of returning home to see their families, arrange their business, and purchase provisions. I feel confident in saying there are fifty men in this "Placer," who have on an average \$1,000 each, obtained in May and June. I have not met with any person who had been fully employed in washing gold one month; most, however, appear to have averaged an ounce per day. I think there must, at this time, be over 1,000 men at work upon the different branches of the Sacramento; putting their gains at \$10,000 per day, for six days in the week, appears to me not overrated.

Should this news reach the emigration of California and Oregon, now on the road, connected with the Indian wars, now impoverishing the latter country, we should have a large addition to our population; and should the richness of the gold region continue, our emigration in 1849 will be many thousand, and in 1850 still more. If our countrymen in California as clerks, mechanics and workmen will forsake employment at from \$2 to \$6 per day, how many more of the same class in the Atlantic States, earning much less, will leave for this country under such prospects? It is the opinion of many who have visited the gold regions the past and present months, that the ground will afford gold for many years, perhaps for a century. From my own examination of the rivers and their banks, I am of opinion that, at least for a few years, the golden products will equal the present year. However, as neither men of science, nor the laborers now at work, have made any explorations of consequence' it is a matter of impossibility to give any opinion as to the extent and richness of this part of California. Every Mexican who has seen the place says that throughout their Republic there has never been any "placer like this one."

Could Mr. Polk and yourself see California as we now see it, you would

think that a few thousand people, on one hundred miles square of the Sacramento valley, would yearly turn out of this river the whole price our country pays for the acquired territory. When I finished my first letter, I doubted my own writing, and to be better satisfied, showed it to one of the principal merchants of San Francisco, and to Capt. Fulsom, of the Quartermaster's Department, who decided at once that I was far below the reality. You certainly will suppose, from my two letters, that I am, like others, led away by the excitement of the day. I think I am not. In my last I enclosed a small sample of the gold dust, and I find my only error was in putting a value on the sand. At that time I was not aware how the gold was found ; I now can describe the mode of collecting it.

A person without a machine, after digging off one or two feet of the upper ground, near the water, (in some cases they take the top earth,) throws into a tin pan or wooden bowl, a shovel full of loose dirt and stones ; then placing the basin an inch or two under water, continues to stir up the dirt with his hand in such a manner that the running water will carry off the light earth, occasionally, with his hand, throwing out the stones ; after an operation of this kind for twenty or thirty minutes, a spoonful of small black sand remains ; this is on a handkerchief or cloth dried in the sun, the emerge is blown off, leaving the pure gold. I have the pleasure of enclosing a paper of this sand and gold, which I, from a bucket of dirt and stones, in half an hour, standing at the edge of the water, washed out myself. The value of it may be two or three dollars.

The size of the gold depends in some measure upon the river from which it is taken, the banks of one river having larger grains of gold than another. I presume more than one half of the gold put into pans or machines is washed out and goes down the stream ; this is of no consequence to the washers, who care only for the present time. Some have formed companies of four or five men, and have a rough made machine put together in a day, which worked to much advantage, yet many prefer to work alone, with a wooden bowl or tin pan, worth fifteen or twenty cents in the States, but eight to sixteen dollars at the gold region. As the workmen continue, and materials can be obtained, improvements will take place in the mode of obtaining gold ; at present it is obtained by standing in the water, and with much severe labor, or such as is called here severe labor.

How long this gathering of gold by the handfulls will continue here, or the future effect it will have on California, I cannot say. Three-fourths of the houses in the town on the bay of San Francisco are deserted. Houses are sold at the prices of the ground lots. The effects are this week showing themselves in Monterey. Almost every house I hired out is given up. Every blacksmith, carpenter and lawyer are leaving ; brick-



yards, saw-mills and ranches are left perfectly alone. A large number of the Volunteers at San Francisco and Sonoma have deserted; some have been retaken and brought back; public and private vessels are losing their crews; my clerks have had 100 per cent. advance offered them on their wages to accept employment. A complete revolution in the ordinary state of affairs is taking place; both of our newspapers are discontinued from want of workmen and the loss of their agencies; the Alcaldes have left San Francisco, and I believe Sonoma likewise; the former place has not a Justice of the Peace left.

The second Alcalde of Monterey to-day joins the keepers of our principal Hotel, who have closed their office and house, and will leave to-morrow for the golden rivers. I saw on the ground a lawyer, who was last year Attorney General for the King of the Sandwich Islands, digging and washing out his ounce and a half per day; near him can be found most all his brethren of the long robe, working in the same occupation.

To conclude: my letter is long, but I could not well describe what I have seen in less words, and I now can believe that my account may be doubted; if the affair proves a bubble, a mere excitement; I know not how we can all be deceived as we are situated. Gov. Mason and his staff have left Monterey to visit the place in question, and will, I suppose, soon forward to his department his views and opinions on this subject. Most of the land where gold has been discovered, is public land; there are on different rivers some private grants. I have three such purchased in 1846 and '47, but have not learned that any private lands have produced gold, though they may hereafter do so.

I have the honor, dear sir; to be,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOMAS O. LARKIN.

Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN, Secretary of State, Washington City.

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### SECTION III.

THE REPORT OF COL. MASON IN RELATION TO THE MINES.

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INTERESTING DESPATCH FROM CALIFORNIA.

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Among the documents received by the Secretary of War, and communicated with the President's message, is the following letter from Col. Mason, the military commandant of California, who presents the fullest description we have seen of the gold "placers" of that distant region:—

[No. 37.]

HEAD QUARTERS, 10th MILITARY DEPARTMENT, }  
Monterey, California, Aug. 17, 1848. }

Sir : I have the honor to inform you that, accompanied by Lieut. W. T. Sherman, 3d Artillery, A. A. A. General, I started on the 12th of June last, to make a tour through the northern part of California. My principal purpose, however, was to visit the newly discovered gold "placer" in the valley of the Sacramento. I had proceeded about forty miles, when I was overtaken by an express, bringing me intelligence of the arrival at Monterey of the United States Ship Southampton, with important letters from Commodore Shubrick and Lieut. Colonel Burton. I returned at once to Monterey, and despatched what business was most important, and on the 17th resumed my journey. We reached San Francisco on the 20th, and found that all, or nearly all, its male inhabitants had gone to the mines.—The town which a few months before was so busy and thriving, was then almost deserted. On the evening of the 24th, the horses of the escort were crossed to Sousoleto in a launch, and on the following day we resumed the journey by way of Bodega and Sonoma to Sutter's Fort, where we arrived on the morning of the 2d July. Along the whole route mills were lying idle, fields of wheat were open to cattle and horses, houses vacant, and farms going to waste. At Sutter's there was more life and business. Launches were discharging their cargoes at the river, and carts were hauling goods to the fort, where already were established several stores, a hotel, &c. Capt. Sutter had only two mechanics in his employ (a wagon maker and a blacksmith,) whom he was then paying ten dollars a day.—Merchants pay him a monthly rent of \$100 per room, and whilst I was there, a two story house in the fort was rented as a hotel for \$500 a month.

At the urgent solicitation of many gentlemen, I delayed there to participate in the first public celebration of our national anniversary at that fort, but on the 5th resumed the journey, and proceeded twenty-five miles up the American fork, to a point on it now known as the Lower Mines, or Mormon Diggings. The hill-sides were thickly strewn with canvass tents and bush arbors ; a store was erected, and several boarding shanties in operation. The day was intensely hot, yet about two hundred men were at work in the full glare of the sun, washing for gold—some with tin pans, some with close woven Indian baskets, but the greater part had a rude machine, known as the cradle. This is on rockers, six or eight feet long, open at the foot, and at its head has a coarse grate, or sieve ; the bottom is rounded with small cleets nailed across. Four men are required to work this machine ; one digs the ground in the bank close by the stream, another carries it to the cradle and empties it on the grate, a third gives a violent rocking motion to the machine, whilst a fourth dashes on water from the stream itself. The sieve keeps the coarse stones from entering

the cradle, the current of water washes off the earthy matter, and the gravel is gradually carried out at the foot of the machine, leaving the gold mixed with a heavy fine black sand above the first cleets. The sand and gold mixed together are then drawn off through augur holes into a pan below; are dried in the sun, and afterwards separated by blowing off the sand. A party of four men thus employed at the lower mines, average \$100 a day. The Indians, and those who have nothing but pans or willow baskets, gradually wash out the earth, and separate the gravel by hand, leaving nothing but the gold mixed with sand, which is separated in the manner before described. The gold in the lower mines is in fine bright scales, of which I send several specimens.

As we ascended the south branch of the American fork, the country became more broken and mountainous, and at the saw-mill, 25 miles below the lower washings, or 50 miles from Sutter's, the hills rise to about a thousand feet above the level of the Sacramento plain. Here a species of pine occurs, which led to the discovery of the gold. Capt. Sutter feeling the great want of lumber, contracted in September last with a Mr. Marshall to build a saw-mill at that place. It was erected in the course of the past winter and spring—a dam and race constructed; but when the water was let on the wheel, the tail-race was found to be too narrow to permit the water to escape with sufficient rapidity. Mr. Marshall, to save labor, let the water directly into the race with a strong current, so as to wash it wider and deeper. He effected his purpose, and a large bed of mud and gravel was carried to the foot of the race. One day Mr. Marshall, as he was walking down the race to this deposit of mud, observed some glittering particles at its upper edge; he gathered a few, examined them, and became satisfied of their value. He then went to the fort, told Capt. Sutter of his discovery, and they agreed to keep it a secret until a certain grist-mill of Sutter's was finished. It, however, got out, and spread like magic. Remarkable success attended the labors of the first explorers, and in a few weeks hundreds of men were drawn thither. At the time of my first visit, but little more than three months after its first discovery, it was estimated that upwards of four thousand people were employed. At the mill there is a fine deposit or bank of gravel, which the people respect as the property of Capt. Sutter, although he pretends to no right to it, and would be perfectly satisfied with the simple promise of a pre-emption, on account of the mill which he has built there at considerable cost. Mr. Marshall was living near the mill, and informed me that many persons were employed above and below him; that they used the same machines as at the lower washings, and that their success was about the same—ranging from one to three ounces of gold per man daily. This gold, too, is in scales a little coarser than those of the lower mines. From the mill

Mr. Marshall guided me up the mountain on the opposite or north bank of the south fork, where, in the bed of small streams or ravines, now dry, a great deal of coarse gold has been found. I there saw several parties at work, all of whom were doing very well; a great many specimens were shown me, some as heavy as four or five ounces in weight, and I send three pieces labeled No. 5, presented by a Mr. Spence. You will perceive that some of the specimens accompanying this, hold mechanically pieces of quartz; that the surface is rough, and evidently moulded in the crevice of a rock. This gold cannot have been carried far by water, but must have remained near where it was first deposited, from the rock that once bound it. I inquired of many if they had encountered the metal in its matrix, but in every instance they said they had not; but that the gold was invariably mixed with washed gravel, or lodged in the crevices of other rocks. All bore testimony that they had found gold in greater or less quantities in the numerous gullies or ravines that occur in that mountainous region. On the 7th of July I left the mill, and crossed to a small stream emptying into the American fork, three or four miles below the saw mill. I struck the stream (now known as Weber's creek) at the washings of Sunoi & Co. They had about thirty Indians employed, whom they pay in merchandise. They were gathering gold of a character similar to that found in the main fork, and doubtless in sufficient quantities to satisfy them. I send you a small specimen, presented by this company, of their gold. From this point we proceeded up the stream about eight miles, where we found a great many people and Indians—some engaged in the bed of the stream, and others in the small side valleys that put into it. These latter are exceedingly rich, and two ounces were considered an ordinary yield for a day's work. A small gutter, not more than a hundred yards long, by four feet wide, and two or three feet deep, was pointed out to me as the one where two men, William Daly and Perry McCoon, had, a short time before, obtained \$17,000 worth of gold. Capt. Weber informed me that he knew these two men had employed four white men and about a hundred Indians, and that at the end of one week's work, they paid off their party, and had left \$10,000 worth of this gold. Another small ravine was shown me, from which had been taken upwards of \$12,000 worth of gold. Hundreds of similar ravines, to all appearances, are as yet untouched. I could not have credited these reports, had I not seen, in the abundance of the precious metal, evidence of their truth. Mr. Neligh, an agent of Commodore Stockton, had been at work about three weeks in the neighborhood, and showed me in bags and bottles, over \$2,000 worth of gold; and Mr. Lyman, a gentleman worthy of every credit, said he had been engaged with four others, with a machine, on the American fork, just below Sutter's mill, that they had worked eight days, and that

his share was at the rate of \$50 a day ; but hearing that others were doing better at Weber's place, they had removed there, and were then on the point of resuming operations. I might tell of hundreds of similar instances, but to illustrate how plentiful the gold was in the pockets of common laborers, I will mention a simple occurrence which took place in my presence when I was at Weber's store. This store was nothing but an arbor of bushes, under which he had exposed for sale goods and groceries suited to his customers. A man came in, picked up a box of Sedlitz powders, and asked its price. Capt. Weber told him it was not for sale. The man offered an ounce of gold, but Capt. Weber told him it only cost 50 cents, and that he did not wish to sell it. The man then offered an ounce and a half, when Capt Weber had to take it. The prices of all things are high, and yet Indians, who before hardly knew what a breach cloth was, can now afford to buy the most gaudy dresses.

The country on either side of Weber's creek is much broken up by hills, and is intersected in every direction by small streams or ravines, which contain more or less gold. Those that have been worked are barely scratched, and although thousands of ounces have been carried away, I do not consider that a serious impression has been made upon the whole. Every day was developing new and richer deposits ; and the only impression seemed to be, that the metal would be found in such abundance as seriously to depreciate in value.

On the 8th of July, I returned to the lower mines, and on the following day to Sutter's, where, on the 10th, I was making preparations for a visit to the Feather, Yubah and Bear rivers, when I received a letter from Commander A. R. Long, United States Navy, who had just arrived at San Francisco from Mazatlan, with a crew for the sloop-of-war Warren, with orders to take that vessel to the squadron at La Paz. Capt. Long wrote to me that the Mexican Congress had adjourned without ratifying the treaty of peace ; that he had letters for me from Commodore Jones, and that his orders were to sail with the Warren on or before the 20th of July. In consequence of these, I determined to return to Monterey, and accordingly arrived here on the 17th of July. Before leaving Sutter's, I satisfied myself that gold existed in the bed of the Feather river, in the Yubah and Bear, and in many of the small streams that lie between the latter and the American fork ; also, that it had been found in the Consumnes to the south of the American fork. In each of these streams the gold is found in small scales, whereas, in the intervening mountains, it occurs in coarser lumps.

Mr. Sinclair, whose rancho is three miles above Sutter's, on the north side of the American, employs about fifty Indians on the north fork, not far from its junction with the main stream. He had been engaged about

five weeks when I saw him, and up to that time his Indians had used simply closely-woven willow baskets. His nett proceeds (which I saw) were about \$16,000 worth of gold. He showed me the proceeds of his last week's work—fourteen pounds avoirdupois of clean-washed gold.

The principal store at Sutter's fort, that of Brannan & Co., had received in payment for goods \$36,000 (worth of this gold) from the 1st of May to the 10th of July. Other merchants had also made extensive sales. Large quantities of goods were daily sent forward to the mines, as the Indians, heretofore so poor and degraded, have suddenly become consumers of the luxuries of life. I before mentioned that the greater part of the farmers and rancheros had abandoned their fields to go to the mines. This is not the case with Captain Sutter, who was carefully gathering his wheat, estimated at 40,000 bushels. Flour is already worth, at Sutter's, \$36 a barrel, and soon will be fifty. Unless large quantities of bread-stuff reach the country, much suffering will occur; but as each man is now able to pay a large price, it is believed the merchants will bring from Chili and Oregon a plentiful supply for the coming winter.

The most moderate estimate I could obtain from men acquainted with the subject, was, that upwards of 4,000 men were working in the gold district, of whom more than one-half were Indians; and that from \$30,000 to \$50,000 worth of gold, if not more, was daily obtained. The entire gold district, with very few exceptions of grants made some years ago by the Mexican authorities, is on land belonging to the United States. It was a matter of serious reflection with me, how I could secure to the government certain rents or fees for the privilege of procuring this gold; but upon considering the large extent of country, the character of the people engaged, and the small scattered force at my command, I resolved not to interfere, but to permit all to work freely, unless broils and crime should call for interference. I was surprised to learn that crime of any kind was very unfrequent, and that no thefts or robberies had been committed in the gold district. All live in tents, in bush arbors, or in the open air; and men have frequently about their persons thousands of dollars' worth of this gold—and it was to me a matter of surprise that so peaceful and quiet a state of things should continue to exist. Conflicting claims to particular spots of ground may cause collisions, but they will be rare, as the extent of country is so great, and the gold so abundant, that for the present there is room enough for all. Still, the government is entitled to rents for this land, and immediate steps should be devised to collect them—for the longer it is delayed, the more difficult it will become. One plan I would suggest, is, to send out, from the United States, surveyors, with high salaries, bound to serve specified periods. A superintendent to be appointed at Sutter's fort, with power to grant licenses to work

spot of ground, say one hundred yards square, for one year, at a rent of from 100 to 1,000 dollars, at his discretion; the surveyors to measure the ground, and place the renter in possession.

A better plan, however, will be, to have the district surveyed and sold at public auction to the highest bidder, in small parcels, say from 20 to 40 acres. In either case, there will be many intruders, whom, for years, it will be almost impossible to exclude.

The discovery of these vast deposits of gold has entirely changed the character of Upper California. Its people, before engaged in cultivating their small patches of ground, and guarding their herds of cattle and horses, have all gone to the mines, or are on their way thither. Laborers of every trade have left their work benches, and tradesmen their shops. Sailors desert their ships as fast as they arrive on the coast, and several vessels have gone to sea with hardly enough hands to spread a sail. Two or three are now at anchor in San Francisco with no crew on board. Many desertions, too, have taken place from the garrisons within the influence of these mines; twenty-six soldiers have deserted from the post of Sonoma, twenty-four from that of San Francisco, and twenty-four from Monterey. For a few days the evil appeared so threatening, that great danger existed that the garrisons would leave in a body; and I refer you to my order of the 25th of July, to show the steps adopted to meet this contingency. I shall spare no exertions to apprehend and punish deserters, but I believe no time in the history of our country has presented such temptations to desert as now exist in California. The danger of apprehension is small, and the prospect of high wages certain; pay and bounties are trifles, as laboring men at the mines can now earn in one day more than double a soldier's pay and allowances for a month; and even the pay of a lieutenant or captain cannot hire a servant. A carpenter or mechanic would not listen to an offer of less than fifteen or twenty dollars a day. Could any combination of affairs try a man's fidelity more than this? and I really think some extraordinary mark of favor should be given to those soldiers who remain faithful to their flag throughout this tempting crisis. No officer can now live in California on his pay, money has so little value; the prices of necessary articles of clothing and subsistence are so exorbitant, and labor so high, that to hire a cook or servant has become an impossibility, save to those who are earning from thirty to fifty dollars a day. This state of things cannot last forever. Yet from the geographical position of California, and the new character it has assumed as a mining country, prices of labor will always be high, and will hold out temptations to desert. I therefore have to report, if the government wish to prevent desertions here on the part of the men, and to secure zeal on the part of the officers, their pay must be increased very materially. Soldiers, both

of the volunteer and regular service, discharged in this country, should be permitted at once to locate their land warrants in the gold district. Many private letters have gone to the United States giving accounts of the vast quantity of gold recently discovered, and it may be a matter of surprise why I have made no report on this subject at an earlier date. The reason is, that I could not bring myself to believe the reports that I heard of the wealth of the gold district until I visited it myself. I have no hesitation now in saying, that there is more gold in the country, drained by the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, than will pay the cost of the present war with Mexico a hundred times over. No capital is required to obtain this gold, as the laboring man wants nothing but his pick and shovel and tin pan, with which to dig and wash the gravel; and many frequently pick gold out of the crevices of rocks with their butcher knives, in pieces from one to six ounces.

Mr Dye, a gentleman residing in Monterey, and worthy of every credit, has just returned from Feather River. He tells me that the company to which he belonged, worked seven weeks and two days, with an average of fifty Indians, (washers,) and that their gross product was two hundred and seventy-three pounds of gold. His share, (one-seventh,) after paying all expenses, is about thirty-seven pounds, which he brought with him, and exhibited in Monterey. I see no laboring man from the mines who does not show his two, three or four pounds of gold. A soldier of the Artillery company returned here, a few days ago, from the mines, having been absent, on furlough, twenty days. He made by trading and working during that time, \$1,500. During these twenty days, he was travelling ten or eleven days, leaving but a week, in which he made a sum of money greater than he receives in pay, clothes, and rations, during a whole enlistment of five years. These statements appear incredible, but they are true.

Gold is also believed to exist on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada; and when at the mines, I was informed by an intelligent Mormon that it had been found near the Great Salt Lake by some of his fraternity.— Nearly all the Mormons are leaving California, to go to the Salt Lake; and this they surely would not do, unless they were sure of finding gold there in the same abundance as they now do on the Sacramento.

The gold "placer" near the mission of San Fernando has long been known, but has been little wrought, for want of water. This is in a spur that puts off from the Sierra Nevada, (see Fremont's map,) the same in which the present mines occur. There is, therefore, every reason to believe, that in the intervening spaces of five hundred miles (entirely unexplored) there must be many hidden and rich deposits. The "placer" gold is now substituted as the currency of this country; in trade



it passes freely at \$10 per ounce ; as an article of commerce its value is not yet fixed. The only purchase I made was of the specimen, No 7, which I got of Mr. Neligh, at \$12 the ounce. That is about the present cash value in the country, although it has been sold for less. The great demand for goods and provisions made by this sudden development of wealth, has increased the amount of commerce at San Francisco very much, and it will continue to increase.

I would recommend that a mint be established at some eligible point of the bay of San Francisco ; and that machinery, and all the necessary apparatus and workmen, be sent out by sea. These workmen must be bound by high wages, and even bonds, to secure their faithful services, else the whole plan may be frustrated by their going to the mines as soon as they arrive in California. If this course be not adopted, gold to the amount of many millions of dollars will pass yearly to other countries, to enrich their merchants and capitalists. Before leaving the subject of mines, I will mention, that on my return from the Sacramento, I touched at New Almoder, the quicksilver mine of Mr. Alexander Forbes, consul of her Britannic Majesty, at Tepic. This mine is in a spur of mountains 1,000 feet above the level of the bay of San Francisco, and is distant in a southern direction from the Pueblo de San José about 12 miles. The ore (cinnabar) occurs in a large vein dipping at a strong angle to the horizon. Mexican miners are employed in working it by driving shafts and galleries about 6 feet by 7, following the vein.

The fragments of rock and ore are removed on the back of Indians, in raw-hide sacks. The ore is then hauled in an ox-wagon, from the mouth of the mine, down to a valley well supplied with wood and water, in which the furnaces are situated. The furnaces are of the simplest construction, exactly like a common bake-oven, in the crown of which is inserted a whaler's trying kettle ; another inverted kettle forms the lid. From a hole in the lid a small brick channel leads to an apartment, or chamber, in the bottom of which is inserted a small iron kettle. This chamber has a chimney.

In the morning of each day the kettles are filled with the mineral (broken in small pieces) mixed with lime ; fire is then applied and kept up all day. The mercury is volatilized, passes into the chamber, is condensed on the sides and bottom of the chamber, and flows into the pot prepared for it. No water is used to condense the mercury.

During a visit I made last spring, four such ovens were in operation, and yielded in the two days I was there 656 pounds of quicksilver, worth at Mazatlan \$1,80 per pound. Mr. Walkinshaw, the gentleman now in charge of this mine, tells me that the vein is improving, and that he can afford to keep his people employed even in these extraordinary times.

This mine is very valuable of itself, and becomes the more so as mercury is extensively used in obtaining gold. It is not at present used in California for that purpose, but will be at some future time. When I was at this mine last spring, other parties were engaged in searching for veins, but none have been discovered that are worth following up, although the earth in that whole range of hills is highly discolored, indicating the presence of this ore. I send several beautiful specimens, properly labelled. The amount of quicksilver in Mr. Forbes's vats on the 15th day of July was about 2500 lbs.

I enclose you herewith sketches of the country through which I passed, indicating the position of the mines and the topography of the country in the vicinity of those I visited.

Some of the specimens of gold accompanying this were presented for transmission to the department by the gentlemen named below. The numbers on the topographical sketch corresponding to the labels of the respective specimens show from what part of the gold region they were obtained.

1. Captain J. A. SUTTER.
2. JOHN SINCLAIR.
3. W. GLOVER, R. C. KIRBY, IRA BLANCHARD, LEVI FIELD, FRANKLIN H. ARYNES, Mormon Diggings.
4. CHARLES WEBER.
5. ROBERT SPENCE.
6. SUNOL & Co.
7. ROBERT D. NELIGH.
8. C. E. PICKET, American Fork Columa.
9. E. C. KEMBLE.
10. T. H. GREEN, from San Fernando, near Los Angeles.
  - A. 2oz. purchased from Mr. NELIGH.
  - B. Sand found in washing gold, which contains small particles.
11. Captain FRISBIE, Dry Diggings, Weber's Creek.
12. Consumnes.
13. Consumnes, Hartwell's ranch.

I have the honor to be your most obedient servant,

R. B. MASON,

Colonel 1st Dragoons, Commanding.

Brigadier General R. JONES,

Adjutant General U. S. A., Washington, D. C.

NOTE.—The original letter of which this is a copy, was sent to its address, in charge of Lieut. L. Loeser, 3d Artillery, bearer of despatches, who sailed in the schooner Lambayecana, from Monterey, Aug. 30, 1848 bound for Payta, Peru. Lieut. Loeser bears, in addition to the specimens mentioned in the foregoing letter, a tea caddy containing two hundred and thirty ounces, fifteen pennyweights, and nine grains of gold. This was purchased at San Francisco, by my order, and is sent to you as a fair sample of the gold obtained from the mines of Sacramento. It is a mixture, coming from the various parts of the gold district.

R. B. MASON,

Colonel 1st Dragoons, Commanding.

HEAD-QUARTERS 10TH MIL. DEPARTMENT, }  
 Monterey, (Cal.) Sept. 10, 1848. }

## SECTION IV.

ALL THAT PORTION OF THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE WHICH RELATES TO CALIFORNIA.

Information received from Officers of the Navy and other sources, though not so full and minute, confirm the accounts of the Commander of our military force in California. It appears, also, from these reports that mines of quicksilver are found in the vicinity of the gold region. One of them is now being worked, and is believed to be among the most productive in the world.

The effects produced by the discovery of these rich mineral deposits, and the success which has attended the labors of those who have resorted to them, have produced a surprising change in the state of affairs in California. Labor commands a most exorbitant price, and all other pursuits but that of searching for the precious metals are abandoned. Nearly the whole of the male population of the country have gone to the gold district. Ships arriving on the coast are deserted by their crews, and their voyages suspended for want of sailors. Our Commanding Officer there entertains apprehensions that soldiers cannot be kept in the public service without a large increase of pay. Desertions in his command have become frequent, and he recommends that those who shall withstand the strong temptation, and remain faithful, should be rewarded.

This abundance of gold, and the all engrossing pursuit of it, have already caused in California an unprecedented rise in the price of the necessaries of life.

That we may the more speedily and fully avail ourselves of the undeveloped wealth of these mines, it is deemed of vast importance that a branch of the mint of the United States be authorized to be established at your present session, in California. Among other signal advantages which would result from such an establishment would be that of raising the gold to its par value in that territory. A branch mint of the United States at the great commercial depot on the west coast would convert into our own coin not only the gold derived from our own rich mines, but also the bullion and specie which our commerce may bring from the whole west coast of Central and South America. The west coast of America, and the adjacent interior, embrace the richest and best mines of Mexico, New Grenada, Central America, Chili, and Peru. The bullion and specie drawn from these countries, and especially from those of Western Mexico and Peru, to an amount in value of many millions of dollars, are now annually diverted and carried by the ships of Great Britain to her own ports,

to be recoined or used to sustain her national bank, and thus contribute to increase her ability to command so much of the commerce of the world. If a branch mint be established at the great commercial point upon that coast, a vast amount of bullion and specie would flow thither to be re-coined, and pass thence to New Orleans, New York and other Atlantic cities. The amount of our constitutional currency at home would be greatly increased, while its circulation would be promoted. It is well known to our merchants trading to China and the west coast of America, that great inconvenience and loss are experienced from the fact that our coins are not current at their par value in those countries.

The powers of Europe, far removed from the west coast of America by the Atlantic ocean which intervenes, and by a tedious and dangerous navigation around the southern cape of the continent of America, can never successfully compete with the United States in the rich and extensive commerce which is opened to us at so much less cost by the acquisition of California.

The vast importance and commercial advantages of California have heretofore remained undeveloped by the government of the country of which it constituted a part. Now that this fine province is a part of our country, all the States of the Union, some more immediately and directly than others, are deeply interested in the speedy development of its wealth and resources. No section of our country is more interested, or will be more benefitted, than the commercial, navigating, and manufacturing interests of the Eastern States. Our planting and farming interests in every part of the Union will be greatly benefitted by it. As our commerce and navigation are enlarged and extended, our exports of agricultural products and of manufactures will be increased; and in the new markets thus opened, they cannot fail to command remunerating and profitable prices.

The acquisition of California and New Mexico, the settlement of the Oregon boundary, and the annexation of Texas, extending to the Rio Grande, are results which, combined, are of greater consequence, and will add more to the strength and wealth of the nation than any which have preceded them since the adoption of the Constitution.

But to effect these great results, not only California, but New Mexico, must be brought under the control of regularly organized governments.—The existing condition of California, and of that part of New Mexico lying west of the Rio Grande, and without the limits of Texas, imperiously demand that Congress should, at its present session, organize territorial governments over them.

Upon the exchange of ratifications of the treaty of peace with Mexico, on the thirtieth of May last, the temporary governments which had been

established over New Mexico and California by our military and naval commanders, by virtue of the rights of war, ceased to derive any obligatory force from that source of authority; and having been ceded to the United States, all government and control over them under the authority, of Mexico had ceased to exist. Impressed with the necessity of establishing territorial governments over them, I recommended the subject to the favorable consideration of Congress in my message communicating the ratification of peace, on the sixth of July last, and invoked their action at that session. Congress adjourned without making any provision for their government. The inhabitants, by the transfer of their country, had become entitled to the benefits of our laws and constitution, and yet were left without any regularly organized government. Since that time, the very limited power possessed by the Executive has been exercised to preserve and protect them from the inevitable consequences of a state of anarchy. The only government which remained, was that established by the military authority during the war. Regarding this to be a *de facto* government, and that by the presumed consent of the inhabitants it might be continued temporarily, they were advised to conform and submit to it for the short intervening period before Congress would again assemble and could legislate on the subject. The views entertained by the Executive on this point, are contained in a communication of the Secretary of State, dated the seventh of October last, which was forwarded for publication to California and New-Mexico, a copy of which is herewith transmitted.

The small military force of the regular army, which was serving within the limits of the acquired territories at the close of the war, was retained in them, and additional forces have been ordered there for the protection of the inhabitants, and to preserve and secure the rights and interests of the United States.

No revenue has been, or could be, collected at the ports in California, because Congress failed to authorize the establishment of custom-houses, or the appointment of officers for that purpose.

The Secretary of the Treasury, by a circular letter addressed to collectors of the customs, on the seventh day of October last, a copy of which is herewith transmitted, exercised all the power with which he was invested by law.

In pursuance of the act of the fourteenth of August last, extending the benefit of our post-office laws to the people of California, the Postmaster General has appointed two agents, who have proceeded, the one to California, and the other to Oregon, with authority to make the necessary arrangements for carrying its provisions into effect.

The monthly line of mail steamers from Panama to Astoria has been required to "stop and deliver and take mails at San Diego, Monterey,

and San Francisco." These mail steamers, connected by the isthmus of Panama with the line of mail steamers on the Atlantic between New York and Chagres, will establish a regular mail communication with California.

It is our solemn duty to provide, with the least practicable delay, for New Mexico and California, regularly organized territorial governments.

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## SECTION V.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE GOLD REGION.

THIS description of the famous "gold region" of California is derived from Lieut. Loeser, bearer of dispatches from Governor Mason. He and his companions crossed the Isthmus, from the Pacific, by the way of Chagres. The news these gentlemen bring, from that remote Territory, fully confirms all the accounts hitherto received regarding its mineral wealth, and the gold fever which universally prevails among the inhabitants. The whole Valley of the Sacramento may be said to be one vast deposit of gold, the metal lying in more or less abundance from the crags of the Sierra Nevada to the embouchures of that river and its many tributaries. People were completely engrossed in collecting it, to the abandonment of almost every other occupation. Produce, and articles of clothing, were at exorbitantly high rates, and labor was scarcely to be hired, at any price. As an example: a cargo of Chilian flour, nothing to be compared to American flour, was lately sold at San Francisco for \$14 a barrel; the same, when conveyed to the gold region, readily produced the speculator three times the amount of the outlay. Every other species of food was equally enhanced in value on reaching the *placers*. The same may be said of implements for digging and removing deposit, such as spades, shovels, picks, &c.

With regard to labor, as much as a dollar and a half an hour has been paid in the construction of wharves at San Francisco, to facilitate the landing of the cargoes of vessels, recently arrived. There was much difficulty in keeping the sailors on board the ships that touched at San Francisco; on the first opportunity, they deserted, and hastened on to the valley of the Sacramento, to swell the multitude of gold diggers. Some short time before the departure from Monterey of the gentlemen above alluded to, a number of men deserted the United States sloop Warren; stealing one of the ship's boats for that purpose.

By direction of Governor Mason, gold dust would be received at the Custom-House at San Francisco in payment of duties, with the privilege to the payer of redeeming the same in coin, one-half in 90, and the other half in 180 days.

There are about 4,000 white persons, beside a number of Indians, engaged in the mines ; and from the fact that no capital is required, they are working in companies on equal shares, or alone with their basket. In one part of the mine, called " the dry diggings," no other implements are necessary than an ordinary sheath-knife, to pick the gold from the rocks. In other parts, where the gold is washed out, the machinery is very simple, being an ordinary trough made of plank, round on the bottom, about ten feet long and two feet wide at the top, with a riddle or sieve at one end, to catch the larger gravel, and three or four small bars across the bottom, about half an inch high, to keep the gold from going out with the dirt and water at the lower end. This machine is set upon rockers, which gives a half rotary motion to the water and dirt inside. But far the largest number use nothing but a large tin pan, or an Indian basket, into which they place the dirt, and shake it until the gold gets to the bottom, and the dirt is carried over the side in the shape of muddy water. It is necessary, in some cases, to have a crowbar, pick and shovel ; but a great deal is taken up with large horns, shapen spoon fashion at the large end.

From the fact that no capital is necessary, a fair competition in labor, without the influence of capital, men who were only able to procure one month's provision, have now thousands of dollars of the precious metal. The laboring class have now become the capitalists of the country.

The following, from the correspondence of the " Californian," (a paper published at San Francisco,) dated " Sonoma, August 5th, 1848," describes a few incidents connected with the " mining fever :"

The mining fever is raging here as elsewhere. Not a mechanic or laboring man can be obtained in town, and most of our male citizens have " gone up" to the Sierra Nevada, and are now enjoying " golden moments." Spades, shovels, pickaxes, hoes, bottles, vials, snuff-boxes, brass tubes, earthen jars, and even barrels, have been put in requisition, and have also abruptly left town.

I have heard of one of our citizens, who has been at the Gold Placero a few weeks, and who had collected \$1,500 worth of the " root of evil," and was still averaging at the rate of \$100 per day. Another gent, wife and boy, collected \$500 worth in one day. Another still, who shut up his hotel here, some five or six weeks since, has returned with \$2,200 in pure virgin gold, collected by his own exertions, with no other aid than a spade, pick and Indian basket.

## SECTION VI.

## VARIOUS PARTICULARS.

*A letter written by Rev. Walter Colton, late Alcalde of Monterey, California, contains the following particulars :*

There are now about 3,000 persons at work in the mines. They average, at the lowest computation, an ounce per day each man. This makes an aggregate of more than a million a month, and this quantity will be doubled in three months. This gold now goes to Mazatlan, Peru and Chili, where it is coined, and becomes a part of the currency of those countries. It is lost to us as the metallic basis of our circulating medium. It can be secured to us only by a mint, and one should be sent out here forthwith. There is at present very little coin in California, and the consequence is, this grain gold is sold here for ten dollars the ounce. It has been assayed by a competent person, and proved to be  $23\frac{1}{2}$  carets good. It must, therefore, be worth at our mint nearly double what it is sold for here.

This monstrous sacrifice is made by Americans, by poor emigrants, and can be saved from it only by a mint, and the gold can be saved to us as a nation, and incorporated with our metallic currency only by a mint. Therefore send us a mint, and the sooner the better. Take one of your mints that is standing nearly idle, and a good assayer, and an honest treasurer, and send them to Chagres, over the Isthmus to Panama, and then to Monterey, and we will coin gold enough for you to pay the Mexican War.

It is impossible to procure labor at any price. The offer of \$10 a day would not detain any one from the mines. The consequence is, our fields are without farmers, our shops without mechanics, our forts without soldiers, our ships without sailors.

The pay of a soldier, exclusive of his provisions and clothes, is about eight dollars per month. One of them got a furlough of twenty days from Col. Mason, went to the mines, spent six days in going and as many in returning, leaving eight for work there, and brought back with him \$800, just about what he would make in eight years soldiering it. Is it to be wondered at, then, that they desert? I doubt if there will be, by the time this letter reaches you, fifty soldiers at all the military posts in California. They will be in the mines; and if you send the few that remain to bring them back, they will themselves go to digging gold.



Nor does the Navy fare a whit better. Let a man-of-war anchor in our harbor to-morrow, and in three weeks she would hardly have men enough to get her to sea. Seamen who have been on this station five years, and who have \$400 or \$500 due them, forfeit the whole and escape to the mines. The only way a merchant vessel gets to sea is to give the men a strong interest in the voyage. There is no discipline, except what they choose to establish among themselves—each, for the time being, is cock of the walk.

*The Journal of Commerce* publishes a spirited letter from California, dated Monterey, Aug. 29th. We copy a few curious particulars :

At present the people are running over the country and picking it out of the earth here and there, just as a thousand hogs, let loose in a forest, would root up ground nuts. Some get eight or ten ounces a day, and the least active one or two. They make the most who employ the wild Indians to hunt it for them. There is one man who has sixty Indians in his employ; his profits are a dollar a minute. The wild Indians know nothing of its value, and wonder what the pale faces want to do with it; they will give an ounce of it for the same weight of coined silver, or a thimbleful of glass beads, or a glass of grog. And white men themselves often give an ounce of it, which is worth at our mint \$18 or more, for a bottle of brandy, a box of soda powders, or a plug of tobacco.

As to the quantity which the diggers get, take a few facts as evidence. I know seven men who worked seven weeks and two days, Sundays excepted—on Feather River; they employed on an average fifty Indians, and got out in these seven weeks and two days, 275 pounds of pure gold. I know the men and have seen the gold, and know what they state to be a fact—so stick a pin there. I know ten other men who worked ten days in company, employed no Indians, and averaged in these ten days \$1,500 each; so stick another pin there. I know another man who got out of a basin in a rock, not larger than a wash bowl, two and a half pounds of gold in fifteen minutes; so stick another pin there! Not one of these statements would I believe did I not know the men personally, and know them to be plain matter of fact men—men who open a vein of gold just as coolly as you would a potato hill.

## SECTION VII.

A correspondent at New Helvetia, California, communicates the following:—

## DESCRIPTION OF THE GOLD REGION.

NEW-HELVETIA, June 30, 1848.

I have just returned to Fort Sacramento, from the gold region, whence I write this; and in compliance with my promise on leaving the sea-coast I send you such items as I have gathered.

Our trip after leaving your city, by way of Pueblo San Jose and San Joaquin River, we found very agreeable, passing over a lovely country, with its vallies and hills covered with the richest verdure, intertwined with flowers of every hue. The country from San Joaquin River to this place is rich beyond comparison, and will admit of a dense population.

We found the fort a miniature of Manchester, a young Lowell. The blacksmith's hammer, the tinner, the carpenter, and the weaver's shuttle plying by the ingenuity of Indians, at which place there are several hundred in the employ of Captain J. A. Sutter. I was much pleased with a walk in the large and beautiful garden attached to the fort. It contains about eight or ten acres, laid out with great taste, under the supervision of a young Swiss. Among the fruit trees I noticed the almond, fig, olive, pear, apple and peach. The grape vines are in the highest state of cultivation, and for vegetables I would refer you to a seedman's catalogue.

About three miles from the fort, on the east bank of the Sacramento, the town of Suttersville is laid out. The location is one of the best in the country, situated in the largest and most fertile district in California, and being the depot for the extensive gold, silver, platina, quicksilver and iron mines. A hotel is building for the accommodation of the travelling public, who are now obliged to impose on the kind hospitalities of Capt. Sutter. A party of men who have been exploring a route to cross the Sierra Nevada mountains have just returned, and report that they have found a good wagon road on the declivity ridge between the American fork and the McCossamy rivers, the distance being much less than by the old route. This road will pass through the gold district, and enter the valley near the American fork.

A ferry is to be established at Suttersville, on the Sacramento, and the road across the *tularie* improved soon, which will shorten the distance from this place to Sonoma and your city about sixty miles.

After leaving the fort, we passed up on the south bank of the American fork, about twelve miles. This is a beautiful river, about three fathoms deep, the water being very cold and clear; and after leaving the river we passed through a country, rolling and timbered with oak. We soon commenced ascending the hills at the base of the great Sierra Nevada, which are thickly set with oak and pine timber, and soon arrived at a small rivulet. One of our party dipped up a cupfull of sand from the bed of the creek, washed it, and found five pieces of gold. This was our first attempt at gold digging. About dark we arrived at the saw-mill of Capt. Sutter, having rode over gold, silver, platina and iron mines, some twenty or thirty miles. The past three days I have spent in exploring the mountains in this district, and conversing with many men who have been at work here for some weeks past. Should I attempt to relate to you all that I have seen, and have been told, concerning the extent and productions of the mines, I am fearful your readers would think me exaggerating too much; therefore, I will keep within bounds. I could fill your columns about the mines here, far excelling the Arabian Nights, and all true to the letter.

As near as I can ascertain, there are now about 2,000 persons engaged. and the roads leading to the mines are thronged with people and wagons. The implements used are shovels, picks, tin pans, wooden bowls and Indian baskets. From one to nine ounces of pure virgin gold per day is gathered by every man who performs the requisite labor. The mountains have been explored for about forty miles, and gold has been found in great abundance in almost every part of them. A gentleman informed me that he had spent some time in exploring the country, and that he had dug fifty-two holes with his butcher's knife in different places, and found gold in every one.

Several extensive silver mines have been discovered, but very little attention is paid to them now. Immense beds of iron ore, of superior quality, yielding from 85 to 90 per cent. have also been found near the American Fork.

A grist mill is to be attached to the saw mill for the purpose of convenience of families and others settling at the mines. The water-power of the American Fork is equal to any upon this continent, and in a few years large iron foundries, splitting and nail mills will be erected.

The granite of the mountains is superior to the celebrated Quincy. A quarry of beautiful marble has been discovered near the McCossamy River, specimens of which you will see in a few years in the front of the Custom House, Merchants' Exchange, City Hall, and other edifices in your flourishing city.

## SECTION VIII.

FIRST DISCOVERY OF THE MINES—RATES AT WHICH GOLD IS VALUED, &c.

In January or February last, some Mormons digging a mill race for Capt. Sutter on the South American Fork, 40 miles from New Helvetia, found a small quantity of yellow metal which proved to be gold. This discovery led to others. The news soon reached the town of San Francisco; but for a short time little or no attention was paid to it, even when some of it was brought there for sale. In the month of April the great quantities of this precious metal which came into market, commenced to attract the attention of the people in Northern California, and a gradual diminishment of the inhabitants was soon perceptible. From that time onward it has been arriving in large quantities in bottles, vials, &c. About the middle of June there were about 1,500 people, all foreigners, working the Placero, which then yielded about \$15,000 per day. At the present time it yields about \$30,000. As the number of workers has increased, it is not now exclusively confined to foreigners, as a great number of the natives have commenced working, and now may be seen the representatives of almost every country on the globe, even the wild Indian tribes. At the lowest estimate the month of July yielded half a million of dollars, reckoning the gold at \$16 per ounce.

The valleys of the Sacramento, which but a short time since were hardly known, are full of wide and dusty roads. Half of the houses in Monterey are empty, and at least two-thirds of those in San Francisco. The hotels and stores have all been closed, and many farms have no occupants whatever. The hotel in San Francisco is, however, again opened under the direction of Robert Parker, of New York; but the expenses must be enormous, as he pays his head steward, a black man, \$1,700 per year, the second \$1,300, and the cook \$900.

In Monterey, at the present time, there is no place of entertainment, and strangers arriving, and officers stationed here, some days hardly know where to get anything to eat, even without the necessary comforts.

Many families are without a single servant, and very difficult sometimes to get anything done whatever. There are no mechanics now left in town except one, a blacksmith; and his forge proves to him a real "Placero," as crowbars and pickaxes are in great demand. There are at San Francisco two or three vessels with only a man on board of each, as the crews have all deserted for the purpose of digging gold. The garrisons here have also lost a great many men, and in all probability will lose a

great many more. The towns in the lower part of Upper California must soon share the fate of San Francisco and Monterey, as the whole population are going crazy—old as well as young, are daily falling victims to the gold fever.

A large portion of the diggers in the months of May and June washed from \$75 to \$100 a day, at \$16 per ounce. Some persons who commenced working at the time of discovery, by the employment of Indians, now have from \$5,000 to \$20,000. Mr. Dye, a resident of this place returned a few days since; he was a member of a company who, in the short space of seven or eight weeks, obtained 240 pounds of gold, clear of all expenses.

The value of the gold in June was \$14 per ounce, in cash; in July \$12; and at the date of the letter, the writer sold a quantity at \$10, for cash. In exchange for goods it is worth somewhat more. The gold could be had of many *poor* holders of *fifty pounds* of gold, at the rate of \$7 per ounce, cash. All the silver had disappeared from circulation. Gold was taken by Gov. Mason in pledge for duties at \$10 per ounce.

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## SECTION IX.

### METHOD OF DOING BUSINESS, EMIGRATING COMPANIES, PASSAGE, &c.

From the matter contained in the foregoing pages, it will be seen that there can be no deception in the seemingly extravagant reports recently circulated in relation to the newly discovered gold mines of California. Indeed, history has long established it as a fact, that this portion of the American continent has been the repository of a vast amount of mineral wealth, which the original Indian inhabitants refused, in despite of the tortures with which they were punished, to reveal to the invading Spaniards. Modern research and perseverance have, however, exposed the precious secret, and ere long, thousands will be flocking to this veritable *Dorado*, so long regarded as a hallucination upon the part of those engaged in the fruitless search.

The whole country, in fact, which occupies that portion of the continent, is rich in gold. It is stated, as an absolute fact, that the gold and silver mines of Mexico produced, in the fourteen years of Spanish rule, from 1796, to 1810, (as ascertained by the coinage reports,) \$342,114,285, being an average of \$24,000,000 a year. In the succeeding period of fifteen years, the coinage was only \$153,276,972, or about \$10,000,000 annually. This diminution of productiveness was ascribed, not to the lack of gold, but to the disturbed state of the country. We regret to say, that these mines are now worked by Englishmen, to whom they have been pledged, for money loaned to the Mexican government,

Rather an amusing state of affairs exists in the more populous towns of California. - The currency is nothing but gold dust, coin being out of the question. Hotels, merchants, boot-makers, and all other branches of business fare alike. A newspaper once on a time flourished in this place, but like all others, the editor and his devils have left.

The lowest wages paid for labor, at San Francisco was, by late accounts, \$5 per day.

Among other expeditions now fitting out, is a "Gold Mining Company," which will probably cross the mountains, from Texas, (its starting point,) early next spring.

On their way out to California, they intend to examine the valley of the *Rio Puerco*, for the purpose of discovering the ruins of a Spanish city, where large quantities of gold were procured during the last century. This city, which was destroyed by hostile Indians, was visited by Col. Doniphan, in his late expedition to Chihuahua.

EMIGRANTS and Volunteers for California, must be prepared for delay on the West Coast. They may find conveyance by ship or steamer at once, and they may be obliged to wait a month; therefore they should be well prepared with provisions or money. The passage from Chagres to Panama is by canoe and mules.

EXPEDITIONS FOR CALIFORNIA are organizing at Boston, Salem, Newburyport, Providence, Bristol, Hartford, New Haven, Albany, Brooklyn, Newark, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Washington and New Orleans. There is scarcely a town in New England that will not send out one or more representatives to the Gold Region. Many of the companies organizing East and North of New York will take passage at this port.

We publish below, from the *Washington Union*, the official letter of the director of the Mint at Philadelphia to the Secretary of the Treasury, showing the assay of the California gold.

The gold assayed yielded \$36,492. The purity is extraordinary, the gold-dust yielding 982.3 pure gold; the melted gold yielding within 6-1000, or six dollars in the one thousand dollars, of the mint standard of 900. This far exceeds the expectations of the most sanguine, and places the extraordinary purity of the gold beyond controversy.

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES, Philadelphia, Dec. 11.

SIR: On the 8th instant we received, as I have already had the honor to inform you, the first deposit of gold from California. It was deposited by Mr. David Carter, who brought it from San Francisco by the Isthmus route. It weighed 1804.59 ounces troy; of which 1423.80 was from the lower surface mines, and 380.79 from those at Feather River. On the 9th instant another deposit was sent by the Secretary of War, which weighed 228 ounces.

The gold was of two sorts in external character, though apparently not

different as to quality. The first, from the "dry diggings," was in grains, which averaged from one to two pennyweights; the other variety, from the swamps or margins of the streams, being in small flat spangles, of which, on an average, it would take six or seven to weigh one grain. Of these, by far the larger part of the deposits was composed.

The gold was melted in six parcels, and the loss by melting, due to the earthy and oxidable matter which disappears in the operation, averaged about 2½ per cent of the original weight. The loss thus reported is moderate, and shows that the gold had been carefully washed.

Assays of the melted gold were made with great care, and the results showed a variation in fineness from 892 to 897 thousandths, the average of the whole being 894. This is slightly below the standard fineness, which is 900.

The average value per ounce of the bullion, before melting is, \$18 05½; that of the same in bars, after melting, is \$18 50.

The whole value of the gold in the two deposits was \$36,492, beside a few ounces reserved in the native state for the Secretary of War, at his request.

Very respectfully, your faithful servant,

R. M. PATTERSON, Director.

Hon. ROBERT J. WALKER, Sec'y of the Treasury.

## SECTION X.

### THE PROPOSED RAIL-ROAD TO THE PACIFIC.

In conclusion, we publish the following Memorial, relating to the proposed Rail-way to the Pacific, offered in Congress by Messrs. Aspinwall, etc. of New-York, which was ordered to be printed :

*To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives :*

The Memorial of William H. Aspinwall, John L. Stephens, Henry Chauncey, and their associates, respectfully represent :

That the acquisition of California and the settlement of our boundary line in Oregon, have opened a new era in the history of this country. Of the value of these new territories they do not propose to speak farther than to say, that the mildness of the climate, the richness of the soil, the great promise of mineral wealth, and above all, the long line of coast, with the magnificent harbors upon the Pacific, seem to be sufficiently appreciated by all classes of our people. At this moment hundreds of young men, full of enterprise, from our Eastern States, are buffeting the storms of Cape Horn, while in the coming Spring the hardy pioneers of the West will be moving by thousands over the desolate prairies or climbing the

steeps of the Rocky Mountains, to build up for us new States on the Pacific. Already it is felt as a hardship by those who go out from among us, that, once settled in California and Oregon, they are, to a great extent, cut off from all the dearest relations of life, and that there are no means of returning, or of personal intercourse with friends at home, except by the stormiest passage ever known at sea, or the most toilsome journey ever made by land.

In view of the condition of this, and to hold out some encouragement to emigrants that they might not be virtually expatriated when upon our own soil, and with a farther view of facilitating our communications with our military and naval stations on the Pacific, Congress, at its session before the last, established a line of monthly mail-steamers from New-York to Chagres, on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus of Panama, and from Panama, on the Pacific side, to California and Oregon. This will no doubt answer sufficiently the great purpose of facilitating correspondence by mail with those territories, but it cannot answer, to any extent, the immediate and pressing want of a thoroughfare for travel which women and children may pass over, nor can it answer at all the constant and sometimes pressing occasions for the transportation of men, munitions of war and naval stores, for our military and naval stations on the Pacific ; all of which, however great the emergency, and at whatever sacrifice of time and money, must go by the long and hazardous voyage around Cape Horn, or by the wild paths across the Rocky Mountains, for half the year covered with snows and entirely impracticable.

The Isthmus of Panama is about 50 miles in breadth, less than on any other part of the Continent of America, and from the falling off of the great range of Cordilleras, running from the Rocky Mountains to the Andes, it has always been considered as the region in which, if ever, an easy communication would be effected, either by canal or road, between the two seas. The route over it is probably worse now than in the earlier days of Spanish dominion, when the gold of Peru passed over it to freight with almost fabulous wealth the argosies of Spain. No wheel carriage has ever attempted to cross it. The present mode of doing so is by canoe, up the Chagres river, set, for a great part of the distance, by poles against the current, and requiring 28 to 30 hours to Cruces. Thence to Panama there is a mule road, difficult at all times for women and children, particularly with the effects of a moving or emigrating party, and during the rainy season almost impassable.

The Pacific Mail Company, charged with the transportation of the mail from Panama to California, and to Oregon, comprising your memorialists, immediately upon assuming the obligations of their contract, saw the necessity for their own interest of improving the road across the Isthmus, and after consultation with several gentlemen in high position at Washington, took upon themselves the burden and expense of fitting out an expedition for the purpose of an examination and survey. One of their associates, to whom the execution of this work was entrusted, passed the last Winter on the Isthmus, attended by two engineers of high standing, who, beside making general observations upon the face of the country, commenced a regular survey at high water mark on the shore of the Pacific, and carried it across the Cordilleras down to the first stream that enters into the Atlantic, when the farther prosecution of the work was broken up by the setting in of the rainy season, and the party returned to New-York.

The scheme of this Company, in incurring the expense of this expedition, contemplated, as your memorialists understand, some action on the part of Government in the way of its aiding in the construction of at least a good wagon or a plank road ; but the result satisfied them that, from



the broken character of the country and the deluges of the rainy season, this would be a work of far greater magnitude than they had expected ; and in the meantime a new aspect has been given to this matter by the important action of the Government itself.

A treaty has been negotiated with the Government of New Grenada, by which the United States have undertaken, in consideration of a free and uninterrupted right of way over the Isthmus of Panama, by any road or roads then existing or thereafter to be made, to guaranty to the public the neutrality of the isthmus and the authority of New Grenada over it ; so that if the isthmus should be invaded by any foreign power, the United States are bound to protect it with their Army and Navy. This treaty, so new in its character, and so important in the obligations it assumes, was ratified by the Senate, as your memorialists understand, without a dissenting voice, and your memorialists regard it as a manifest indication on the part of our government of the great national importance of a free and uninterrupted passage at all times and forever across the Isthmus of Panama, as the closing act of that policy which established the mail route to California and Oregon by way of that Isthmus, and as devolving upon the Government the necessity of lending its countenance toward the improvement of the road across it, without which, they respectfully represent, the heavy obligations of the treaty will be attended with no equivalent advantage, and the right of way thus wisely secured can never be fully enjoyed. Impressed with the importance of this matter, as involving the prosperity of California and Oregon, and the welfare of all who are any in way connected with our citizens in those territories, and regarding it as vitally affecting the best interests of our Government in a political and pecuniary point of view, and having under their control the maps, drawings, and other information procured by the Pacific Mail Company, your memorialists have secured to themselves an exclusive grant or privilege of ninety-nine years from the Republic of New Grenada for constructing a Railroad across the Isthmus of Panama, and they come before your honorable body to ask the co-operation and aid necessary for carrying out this great American work. They beg leave to say that its speedy completion, by private enterprise alone, without the countenance of Government, cannot be expected. Privilege after privilege, similar to that which they now hold, has been granted to others, and all have failed. It does not promise any immediate or certain returns, and for complete and early success, it requires some engagement for employment and compensation by this Government, as an inducement to capitalists to unite with your memorialists in furnishing the necessary means.

Your memorialists believe that events have been rolling on toward a consummation of this long-talked-of work, and that the appointed time has now arrived ; that the acquisition of California by the United States, and the establishment of an organized Government in our territory of Oregon, have fixed the period and the hands by which it is to be accomplished ; that it has become the destiny of this country, for its own interests, for the benefit of its own people, and for the good of the world, alone, promptly, and with out delay, to achieve an enterprise, which, for more than three centuries has under some aspect been contemplated and proposed by all the great Powers of Europe. It is under a strong sense that they but speak the feelings of the great mass of our people that they have ventured to embark in the great enterprise before them, and to aim at becoming instruments in carrying out a work which, from the time when Nunez Balboa from the heights of Darien first saw the great South Sea, has occupied the minds of all civilized people, which must reflect honor upon American enterprise, and which, by bringing into close relations the most distant parts of our republic, must add to and enlarge the sphere of human happiness.

Your memorialists hope that these and other considerations of the like nature may have all proper influence upon your honorable body ; but they ask your co-operation on none of these grounds ; they ask it only on the ground, first, of economy and pecuniary saving to the Government, in the transportation of men, munitions of war and naval stores to our military and naval stations in California and Oregon ; and, second, on the higher and more important political ground of being able, in an emergency, and when occasion requires, to send reinforcements in less than thirty days, instead of six months, as required to send them around Cape Horn or across the Rocky Mountains. They ask no advance of money toward the construction of the road, and no compensation until services are performed ; but they respectfully pray your honorable bodies to empower and direct the Secretary of the Navy to enter into a contract with your memorialists for the transportation on said road, for a period of twenty years, of naval and army supplies, including troops, munitions of war, provisions, naval stores, the mails of the United States, and its public agents, at a sum not exceeding the amount now specified by law to be paid for the transportation of the mails alone from New York to Liverpool ; provided that your memorialists shall within one year commence and within three years complete the construction of a Railroad across the Isthmus of Panama, connecting the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

W. H. ASPINWALL,  
JOHN L. STEPHENS,  
HENRY CHAUNCEY.

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The *New-York Sun* gives the following information respecting the manner of reaching California :

There are at present three modes of reaching California, the passage round Cape Horn, the Panama passage and the Overland, Santa Fe route. A Texas route is being explored, but its practicability is not yet known. The passage around Cape Horn requires six months in sailing vessels, and a vessel must be a good sailer to make the trip in that time. The expense of passage will average \$200. The Panama passage by steamer, providing there is no delay, will require three months, and the price of passage will average \$250. This passage is made by steamer to Chagres, by canoe forty miles up the Chagres river, and twenty miles with mules to Panama, and from Panama to San Francisco by steamer or sailing vessel, as the chance may be. A steamer is being fitted out in this city to sail for Chagres, to navigate that river in connection with the mail steamers, reducing the time of passage across the Isthmus to less than a day.

It is not uncommon to be obliged to wait a month at Panama for a passage up the west coast, so that this delay may be looked for. The overland route, via St. Louis, Independence and Santa Fe, may be made by those who are able to bear the rough and tumble of wild woods travel in three months, at an expense ranging from \$100 to \$200. A stout hearty man, with his rifle, ammunition, buckskin suit of clothes, and a mule, will require little else after he leaves Independence. He can even go without a mule. This route can only be travelled in the spring and summer with mules and wagons. A party leaving Independence in March, might reach the gold regions some time in July. If families are going, the best method is to organize a caravan, with wagons and mules. From March to September, the mules can subsist on prairie grass. The

individual expense of a caravan of one hundred or more persons, would be from 50 to \$100. A person may take advantage of a caravan, and these are constantly starting in the right season from the frontier—and hire a seat in an emigrant wagon, though persons able to bear fatigue can foot the whole route more rapidly.

The western hunter and trapper carries nothing but his buckskin dress, rifle and ammunition; he kills game for a livelihood. Those who intend going by the Panama or Santa Fe route with baggage, should secure it in parcels weighing not more than one hundred and fifty pounds each, for mule transportation. Larger packages, especially in crossing the Isthmus in canoes and with mules, cannot be transported to advantage. The Panama route is the shortest and pleasantest, though the overland route may be made from Independence in about the same time. Those who go with goods, especially heavy merchandise, for the purpose of trade, will probably find Cape Horn the cheapest, if not the quickest passage to California.

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The *Journal of Commerce*, (Dec. 12th) says :

Twenty-two vessels have sailed, and are advertised to sail, for San Francisco, from Boston, New-York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, during the months of November and December. The population of San Francisco and of the gold region, and for a hundred miles around, was in July last, about 5,000 souls, including men, women and children. The emigration from other parts of California, of the disbanded soldiers of Col. Stevenson's regiment, and of the runaway sailors from ships, will increase this population to 1500 more. Our Government have sent out 1000 soldiers, and these twenty-two ships will carry more or less passengers. Their crews will be about 200 men. Some expeditions have gone by land across the Continent, so that by ships and by other means, 2,500 more will be added to the population by the 1st of June next, making a total population of 9,000.

The vessels bound for California vary in tonnage and equipment, from a ship of 800 tons to a Baltimore clipper of 200. Their cargoes also are various. Some of them take out government stores, some coal, some flour; nearly all carry more or less dry goods, as "ventures" of the owners or passengers. One vessel from this port has as portion of her cargo, 3000 pieces of calicoes. Supposing the population of the country to be 12,000, which exceeds by 3,000 the above liberal estimate, there may be 4,000 women, every one of whom could be supplied with a calico dress from this single shipment. Letters from Guayaquil mention the shipment from that port of 1000 dozen Panama hats to San Francisco; so that the men, women and children there will have each a hat. Vessels from Boston and this city have taken five thousand dozen chip hats, (some of these can be used as strainers,) besides fur hats, cloth caps, glazed caps, &c.

Boots and shoes were scarce; and to meet the exigency 30,000 pairs have been included in different invoices, which will be likely to suffice for some time to come, as most of the Californians glory in the luxury of going bare-foot. Of domestic Cottons 1500 bales have been shipped, which will give to each person some hundreds of yards to wear; and of broad cloths sufficient have gone to clothe all in the country for five years to come.—New-York Jobbers having old stock have many of them made shipments of their unsaleable goods—silks, satins, rich shawls and poor ones. One house sent out one hundred dozen lace veils. By being laid over a sieve these may avail in gold-washing; but unless the *Senoritas* of California

have much improved in modesty of late, they will not be much in demand for the purpose for which they were made. Hoes, shovels, pick-axes, and wire sieves have been a favorite investment; and from the quantity on board each vessel, one would think that Whitney's Rail-Road must certainly reach the Atlantic from the Pacific in a very few months. Two very valuable cargoes have already sailed from Liverpool for California, either one of which would supply the market for one year; several also have been dispatched from Hamburg and other ports. Shipments of provisions promise better than of dry goods; but from Oregon large supplies will be drawn; and at last accounts several vessels were loading and loaded at Valparaiso with wheat and flour, where it can be now purchased cheaper than here.

The duration of the voyage will be about five months; so that vessels will arrive in spring and summer, when the fashionable costume of the gold region, for the men, will be a cotton shirt, a pair of drawers, and a chip hat. If every man in the country was a working tailor, they could not make up the dry goods shipped from here, into clothing, in one year; and the shipments of ready-made clothing have been in proportion. This last article will sell first; for, according to reliable accounts, a man may gather from the soil fifty dollars worth of gold, in less time than he could make a garment which five dollars would purchase ready-made.

The emigrant to California, if he has any money, should take it with him in half dollars, and when there, purchase what he may want (which will be very little in the shape of clothing,) to enable him to dig gold in summer. When in the gold region, as he may probably have to sleep on the ground, let him sleep with two thick blankets under him, eat plenty, drink cold water, and he will do well. But take no "ventures," for you will have to wear out and use yourself every thing you take.

Fare on the various routes: From New York to San Francisco (by steam round the Capes,) \$350. From New York to Chagres, (by steam,) \$150. From Chagres to Panama, across the Isthmus, \$20. From Panama to San Francisco, \$250. From New York to Chagres, (by sailing vessel,) \$80.

Duration of voyage: From New York to Chagres, 12 to 15 days. From Chagres to Panama, 2 days. From Panama to San Francisco, 20 days. From New York to San Francisco, (round the Capes,) 130 days.

*From the New-York Herald, extracted from the Californian, of Sept. 16th.*

## SONG OF THE GOLD DIGGERS.

A PARODY ON HOOD'S "SONG OF THE SHIRT."

Dig—dig—dig—  
To pierce for the golden ore;  
Dig—dig—dig—  
Till you sweat at every pore.  
Dig—dig—dig—  
To root in the deep black sand;  
And this is to be a citizen  
Of a free and Christian land!  
And it's oh! to be a slave  
To the Heathen and the Turk,  
To rid the hands of a Christian man  
From such dirty and toilsome work!

Wash—wash—wash—  
Till the back is almost broke;  
Wash—wash—wash—  
With your legs and your thighs in soak,  
Wash—wash—wash—  
Revolving an old tin pan,  
And wabbling about with a shake and a splash,

Till you doubt you're a Christian man!  
Soul and body and mind,  
Mind and body and soul,  
O! can it be right when they're all confined  
To the basin and the "bowl!"

Pile—pile—pile—  
When it's only a little heap—  
Pile—pile—pile—  
Till it "graderly" grows more deep—  
Pile—pile—pile—  
And stow it away in a bag,  
Till you gaze with eyes of wild surprise  
On the contents of *that* rag!  
Oh! can it be here I stand?  
And can it be gold I see?  
Ho! ho! I am off for a Christian land  
To spend it so merrily!

RODERICK DHU.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
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We add the following excellent suggestions, which we find in the *New-York Herald*, for the benefit of those who design to cross the Isthmus; our book without them would be incomplete.

## PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS TO PERSONS ABOUT TO CROSS THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA.

1. Ascertain from the Consul of New-Grenada, in this city, whether a passport be necessary. About three years ago, the Grenadian government issued a circular to all its agents abroad, stating that such a document was indispensable to a foreigner wishing to land in the republic.

2. Upon your arrival at Chagres, take your baggage at once to the custom-house, where you will experience but little delay. Then hurry out of this village, which is pestilential. Hire your canoe, which, for expedition, ought to be of small size. This is called a "piragua," is about 26 feet long, and navigated by a steersman and two rowers. The cost of boat-hire and men to Cruces ought not to exceed \$12, unless, indeed, an increased traffic may have had the effect of raising the prices.

3. Before leaving the vessel in which you arrive at Chagres, get the steward to provide for you a basket of provisions sufficient for two or three days—such as cold fowls or other poultry, hard-boiled eggs, fresh meat, bread, a little tea, sugar, salt, &c. Milk may be procured at the huts on the river. Take with you an "Etna," or machine for boiling water, a tin cup, a knife and fork—in fact, bear in mind that you are to be wholly dependent upon your own resources.

4. Avoid spirituous liquors and salted meats. A few glasses of good wine, to those who have been in the habit of using it, can do no harm.

5. I would recommend to every one to take from two to four grains of sulphate of quinine, the first thing in the morning, in a glass of wine, while on the river. Should you be detained in Panama, take a similar dose once or twice a week. This is the advice of the most eminent physician in England.

6. Do not sleep out of your boat, unless you happen to reach a settlement at night; bear the heat; bear the mosquitoes; do anything rather than expose yourself to the night air, which is the source of every illness in the climate.

7. There are two places on the river Chagres, from whence a road leads to Panama. Gorgona is the first at which you will arrive. Cruces is about five miles higher up. Your boatmen will probably try to induce you to disembark at the former place; do not be persuaded to do so. It is farther from Panama; the road is worse; the beasts are worse and dearer; make them take you to Cruces.

8. Take special care that your baggage be reduced into its smallest possible compass. A mule load consists of two trunks, one on each side of the animal, and you can put a bag or gun case between the two. The whole weight of the cargo must not exceed 230 lbs. Do not take large chests; they have to be placed cross-wise on the mules, cost double, and from the narrowness of the path, stand a fair chance of being knocked to pieces against the rocky sides.

9. The riding mules will be hired to you with saddle and bridle, and the cargo beasts with their packs; so that you need not provide yourself with either. The proper price is \$4.50 for the one, and \$4 for the latter: resist giving more.

10. There is but one Hotel in Panama; the accommodation it affords is wretched, and ruinously dear; the first charge being \$4 a day; there are, however, many families who receive lodgers for \$2 per diem, or even for less; these you will find out by inquiry of any respectable foreign resident, of whom there are several. Do not attempt to camp out, or live under tents; they have no idea of the climate who suggest such a proceeding. Even during the months of January, February and March, which are dry and comparatively pleasant, the attempt would amount to madness.

11. The Patriot doubloon is worth at least \$19 in Panama; do not take less for it; the integral parts of the coin, of course, are valuable in the same proportion.

12. Bear in mind these general rules: Avoid the sun; keep within the house during the day; eschew fruits, even when ripe; oranges in moderation may be excepted. Do not touch the oysters; they are very tempting, but from an intermixture of copper, are almost certain to produce cholera. Wear flannel next to the skin, by day and night. Be civil and courteous to the natives, and they will do anything for you.

These suggestions are offered by one who has twice crossed the Isthmus of Panama. Their only object is the benefit of the hundreds who will probably undertake the passage before accurate information respecting the climate and the customs of the country can be made general. Should any person feel desirous of knowing from whence they emanate, the editor is enabled to satisfy him.









